

This meeting today concerned the future of the steel industry and the Administration's commitment to work with Congress, the industry and labor to ensure that unfair and illegal imports are returned to pre-crisis levels. As my colleagues and constituents know, my commitment to the future stability and viability of our domestic steel industry—which is critical to the economic well-being of West Virginia—is unwavering, and for that reason I felt it necessary to remain at the White House for this important meeting.

Unfortunately, the vote on the Smith Amendment was called earlier than anticipated, and I missed the vote. I would have voted against the Smith Amendment if I could have been in the chamber because I believe in funding for the arts, including the National Endowment for the Arts. I take comfort in the fact that the lopsided margin meant that my vote was not necessary to ensure funding for the NEA. I understand that some have challenged NEA's funding decisions in recent years, but I believe the agency has done an admirable job in modifying its policies and decision making process to respond to concerns. Thanks to these efforts, the NEA is a stronger organization. The arts and the NEA contribute greatly to our culture, and it is a valuable investment in my view.

Mr. ROBB. Mr. President, I add my voice in support of the National Endowment of the Arts, and in opposition to Senator SMITH's amendment. The NEA continues to provide valuable seed money to support a range of worthy endeavors, such as orchestras, inner-city arts outreach programs and efforts to preserve vanishing American cultural institutions. In addition, the NEA plays a strong role in promoting private investment in the arts and helps to bring culture to those Americans who are ordinarily unable to afford access to the arts. As a country, we ought to continue to support these efforts. I urge my colleagues to oppose this amendment.

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, I compliment both the Senator from Nevada and the Senator from West Virginia on very thoughtful and fascinating statements on this matter.

I move to table the Smith amendment and ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion to table amendment No. 1569.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative assistant called the roll.

Mr. NICKLES. I announce that the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) and the Senator from Colorado (Mr. ALLARD) are necessarily absent.

Mr. REID. I announce that the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU) and the Senator from West Virginia

(Mr. ROCKEFELLER) are necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 80, nays 16, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 260 Leg.]

YEAS—80

Abraham	Edwards	Lugar
Akaka	Enzi	McConnell
Baucus	Feingold	Mikulski
Bayh	Feinstein	Moynihan
Bennett	Frist	Murkowski
Biden	Gorton	Murray
Bingaman	Graham	Reed
Bond	Grams	Reid
Boxer	Grassley	Robb
Breaux	Gregg	Roberts
Bryan	Harkin	Roth
Burns	Hatch	Santorum
Byrd	Hollings	Sarbanes
Campbell	Hutchison	Schumer
Chafee	Inouye	Shelby
Cleland	Jeffords	Smith (OR)
Cochran	Johnson	Snowe
Collins	Kennedy	Specter
Conrad	Kerrey	Stevens
Coverdell	Kerry	Thomas
Craig	Kohl	Thompson
Daschle	Lautenberg	Torricelli
DeWine	Leahy	Voinovich
Dodd	Levin	Warner
Domenici	Lieberman	Wellstone
Dorgan	Lincoln	Wyden
Durbin	Lott	

NAYS—16

Ashcroft	Helms	Nickles
Brownback	Hutchinson	Sessions
Bunning	Inhofe	Smith (NH)
Fitzgerald	Kyl	Thurmond
Gramm	Mack	
Hagel	McCain	

NOT VOTING—4

Allard	Landrieu
Crapo	Rockefeller

The motion was agreed to.

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. MOYNIHAN. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—CONFERENCE REPORT TO ACCOMPANY S. 1429

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BUNNING). The majority leader.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 1:06 this afternoon the Senate begin consideration of the reconciliation conference report, notwithstanding the receipt of the papers, and there be 6 hours for debate to be equally divided in the usual form with the vote to occur at the conclusion or yielding back of the time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. ROBB. Reserving the right to object, may I ask a question of the majority leader.

Is it the majority leader's intention to return to the underlying bill, the Interior appropriations bill, at the conclusion of consideration of the tax bill today?

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, to respond to the Senator's question, it is. When we complete reconciliation, at the conclusion of this 6 hours or yielding back time, which theoretically could occur, then when that is completed our intent is to go back to the Interior appropriations bill.

The agreement we had last week was that this week we would try to complete these two appropriations bills, Agriculture and Interior, complete the reconciliation conference report, and try to get as many nominations confirmed as we could get cleared on both sides.

We are still assiduously pursuing that goal.

Mr. ROBB. Mr. President, continuing to reserve the right to object, I ask the majority leader, without specifically asking for an additional unanimous consent request, that if it is his intention to proceed, those of us who have been waiting through two sessions to either raise points of order, offer amendments, or whatever the case may be, to the Interior appropriations bill, might be able to do so tonight after conclusion of this bill. I am in full agreement with the expedition of a number of matters that have been pending on this floor, particularly some of the appointments. While I may not favor the tax bill that will be taken up this afternoon, I am in favor of moving the trains.

With that, if the majority leader is prepared to give that verbal understanding his concurrence, I will not object.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I give my concurrence in that. We intend to return to the Interior appropriations bill. I believe the distinguished manager of this legislation would be glad to agree we would go to this issue immediately upon return, with a vote if one is required.

Mr. GORTON. If the majority leader will yield, I would be delighted to have the first item to be dealt with, with respect to the Interior appropriations bill, immediately after the vote on the tax bill, be the point of order the Senator from Virginia wishes to raise.

Mr. ROBB. Will the majority leader include that particular provision in his unanimous consent request?

Mr. LOTT. I am glad to make that additional request in my unanimous consent request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 1999—CONFERENCE REPORT

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, to my absolute surprise and delight, I understand the water resources development bill has been completed in conference. I extend my hearty congratulations to the managers and to the distinguished chairman of the committee, Senator CHAFEE, for his efforts in getting that conclusion.

I yield the floor to him for a consent request with regard to that conference report.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate now proceed to consideration of the conference report to accompany S. 507.